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## 'Ecology with religion: kinship in Clare' [draft]

EMMA MASON

the fields!  
our church

- Stephen Collis, *The Commons* (2008)<sup>1</sup>

we heard the bells chime  
but the fields was our church

- John Clare, 'Autobiographical Fragments'<sup>2</sup>

In his essay 'Nature, Sound Art and the Sacred', the acoustic ecologist David Dunn argues that 'attentive listening to the sounds around us is one of the most venerable forms of meditative practice'. For Dunn, 'what we hear from other forms of life and the environment they reside in' make 'patterns of relationship' of which humans and nonhumans are part, and which in turn creates an 'experiential basis' from which to understand 'the sacred'.<sup>3</sup> The interconnectedness of all things, spiritual, material, divine and earthly, is key to John Clare's listening to the world, a venture that, this chapter argues, necessitates a religious response to ecological crisis. For Clare, the religious allows for a deep listening that counters empirical modes of knowing and classifying the world. Such empiricism engenders habits of mind that result in an overlooking of the poor, the isolation of species from one another, and a materially and emotionally damaging hierarchizing of the world. Deep listening, however, a sensual engagement that registers the presence of all beings, has the potential to occasion a thinking and acting that brings such beings into an intimate kinship with each other rooted in religion.<sup>4</sup> By 'all beings' I mean both the natural and material as well as the supernatural and divine, the latter pertaining to that which Clare senses but remains hidden and obscured, from gods to will-o'-the-wisps. Critics have already addressed both the natural and supernatural in Clare, but the connections between religion and ecology within his poetry invite further attention.<sup>5</sup> I am not concerned here to align Clare with specific religious ideas and doctrines, nor do I wish to sentimentalise his 'nature' writing through ecological theory. I do suggest, however, that through an aural imagining of nature and the divine as cognate, Clare accesses a cosmic and non-dualist reading of kinship inclusive of all things. Clare finds himself as much 'within the imagined consciousness of a native animal, plant or waterway' as within a bird's song or the chime of a church bell.<sup>6</sup> Both of these sounds call Clare into a close listening and prayerful consciousness that connect up his senses (he synaesthetically 'hears' the field become the church and the trees its spires) and also closes the gap between him, the landscape and the church. This poetic congruence is summed up in my epigraph from Stephen Collis' *The Commons* (2008) – 'the fields! / our church' – a

part of his 'Clear as Clare' sequence and one that opens with Clare's familiar description of setting off to seek the end of the horizon at the edge of the world:<sup>7</sup>

I had imagined that the worlds end was at the edge of the orison and that a  
days journey was able to find it so I went on with my heart full of hopes  
pleasures and discoverys expecting when I got to the brink of the world that I  
coud look down like looking into a large pit and see into its secrets the same  
as I believd I coud see heaven by looking into the water<sup>8</sup>

Rather than imagining a brink over which he might fall into nothingness, Clare hopes that the 'edge of the orison' will provide a threshold into what is hidden there, and associates these 'secrets' with a heaven reflected in water. Like his midnight walk over Baron parks, where he keeps 'a strict eye' out for 'ghosts and goblins', Clare here looks to 'secrets' as a way into the immaterial and mysterious.<sup>9</sup> It is this openness to 'beliefs', both orthodox and alternative, that some readers of Clare miss in their preference for collapsing categories like religion, Romanticism and nature into an affective mush. By taking seriously Clare's beliefs, I suggest that his writing materializes as a lived politics of religious ecology constitutive of care, interconnectivity and inclusivity.<sup>10</sup>

My discussion is in five parts. I begin with the strong relationship between ecocriticism and sound studies (specifically, whale song) and suggest that the field, aspiring to an objective and scientific status, has become increasingly uncomfortable with the subjective, seeking to prize questions like religion away from its empirical meaning. Part two follows this with a reading of Timothy Morton's explicit ambition to replace 'religion' with a more 'scientific' reading of interconnectedness that, in his work on ecology without nature, he calls the 'mesh'. I argue that Clare's religious ecology moves us beyond Morton's dualisms to embrace a cosmic experience of the world that reads and listens to it as a companionable space of sacred relations. He does so by turning to Christianity as the religion with which he is most familiar, but reimagines it through the natural world so that church spires become trees and church bells call believers into the fields. Clare is not a pagan or a pantheist: rather he engages an ecological consciousness in which being appears as an 'integrated fabric' of companionship and care.<sup>11</sup> Drawing on Donna Haraway's companion species theory to think harmony between beings, part three also works with Heidegger's poetic thinking of care as a counter to an instrumental and scientized thinking of the planet as a consumable resource. Heidegger is not popular with Morton, who calls his 'environmentalism' a 'sad, fascist, stunted bonsai version, forced to grow in a tiny iron flowerpot by a cottage in the German Black Forest'.<sup>12</sup> Heidegger's essays on poetry, with their attentive focus on universal compassion and care, do nothing to redress the implicit connection between Nazism and anti-Semitism in the philosopher's questioning of being, home, language and history. And yet Heidegger's thinking of poetry does enable literary critics to step past readings of art as either aesthetics or ideology through an approach that finds in poetry a language of relationism and affection. Heidegger's notion of care (*Sorge*) and caring-for (*Fürsorge*) constitute 'the basic mode of the being of existence, and as

such' determine 'every kind of being': care is the ground on which we understand ourselves and relate to others.<sup>13</sup> Care is threatened, Heidegger argues, by a binarizing metaphysical thinking that dehumanises us through a logic of production and manipulation inherent to a modernity that is conflict, violence and war bound. Poetic thinking reinstates care by 'sheltering' it within a meditative 'saying' that guides us back to a feeling of 'home' and peacefulness Heidegger calls 'dwelling' – a praxis of care-full reading and listening.<sup>14</sup> Compassion and peace between beings 'happens' in poetry because it is a language that does not 'describe' or 'register' the world, but rather projects it as a coming together of the things that dwell within it. As I argue in parts four and five of this discussion, such thinking helps us to explore Clare's own relationship to dwelling, with nature and with gods, and also to reflect on his poetic prose and verse as a way of vitalizing our being as habitual listening. By synthesizing his church and its panoply of bells with his natural landscape, Clare forges a space in which care might flourish as the foundation for kinship and communion.

### *All species are created equal*

In 1967, the environmentalists Roger Payne and Scott McVay were among the first scientists to acknowledge that whales sing in rhythmic, complex and always-different repeated sequences, and in a style recognizable to their context and place. 'All humpbacks in each area sing only the local song', Payne announced in 'Humpbacks: Their Mysterious Songs' (1979), written for the *National Geographic*: 'We have learned that all men are created equal, but the whales remind us that all species are created equal – that every organism on earth, whether large or small, has an inalienable right to life'.<sup>15</sup> Payne's 1970 recording, *Songs of the Humpback Whale*, went on to found such renewed interest in the Save the Whales movement that the International Whaling Commission finally banned commercial whaling in 1986. Whale song has been extraordinarily significant as a context for the current study of literature and the environment and ecocriticism, emerging as it does from a political moment that produced many of the most influential founders of both fields, poets and activists alike.<sup>16</sup> As Harold Fromm argues, the literary movement called 'ecocriticism' emerged in the early 1970s and was shaped at its inception by poets as well as environmentalists. Fromm also notes that the ecocritical language we now work with (deep ecology; eco-Marxism; eco-feminism and so on) is indebted to the poetic and musical traditions of pastoralism and Romanticism, as well as to literary critics and poets from Raymond Williams to Cecilia Vicuña who have long made the connection between poetry and environmentalism.<sup>17</sup> He has less time, however, for philosopher contemporaries of his 1970s history: Heidegger is dismissed (his philosophy is, apparently, 'desperately on life support'<sup>18</sup>); and thinkers like Donna Haraway are excised from the account. Fromm briefly mentions Haraway in his earlier book, *The Nature of Being Human: From Environmentalism to Consciousness* (2009), but steers away from philosophers willing to countenance the immaterial to embrace instead Daniel Dennett and Richard Dawkins as his personal champions of earth's inherent 'wonder' and 'fantastic' realism.<sup>19</sup>

Whale songs and ecocriticism provide two sites on which to address how the immaterial is either ignored or violently translated into the material by many critics currently concerned with the environment. Despite the fact that humans eventually decided to save the whales because of their song, and that the ecological movement is founded on the political environmentalism of poets, ecocritics are keen to excise the subjective in favour of scientism and objectivity. Bioacoustics, for example, has turned attention to the listening experience of birdsong into a gadget-lover's guide to recording techniques and homemade microphones that becomes more complex (and expensive) within the realms of the nature documentary industry.<sup>20</sup> The fashion for 'measuring' organic experience – of animals and plants (blimps and hydrophones) as well as human 'being' (magnetic resonance imaging) – avoids ways of thinking that value what cannot be measured (religion and Romanticism). Here are two agent provocateurs in their now notorious critiques of religion (Lynn White) and Romanticism (Timothy Morton). First White on the 'huge burden of guilt' Christianity bears for validating an anthropocentric thinking in which science and technology flourish and we find ourselves superior in the world:

Human ecology is deeply conditioned by beliefs about our nature and destiny - that is, by religion . . . The victory of Christianity over paganism was the greatest psychic revolution in the history of our culture . . . Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen . . . Our science and technology have grown out of Christian attitudes toward man's relation to nature which are almost universally held . . . We are superior to nature, contemptuous of it, willing to use it for our slightest whim.<sup>21</sup>

Christianity is akin to fascism here, towering over other traditions and being allowed to do so because it elevates us, human beings, to power and predominance. Nothing of what Clare calls Christianity's 'beautiful instruction' of 'peace on earth & good will towards men' is even gestured towards, perhaps because such meaning is carried affectively rather than materially.<sup>22</sup> Now here's Morton in *Ecology without Nature* arguing that we are barred from ecological thought by a dependence on a fetishized idea of 'Nature' as external landscape to be preserved and put 'on a pedestal' (as we used to do, Morton argues, with 'the figure of Woman').<sup>23</sup> By contrast, he argues that 'Nature' is a 'transcendental term in a material mask', wavering

in between the divine and the material. Far from being something 'natural' itself, nature hovers over things like a ghost. It slides over the infinite list of things that evoke it. Nature is thus not unlike 'the subject', a being who searches through the entire universe for its reflection, only to find none. If it is just another word for supreme authority, then why not just call it God? But if this God is nothing outside the material world, then why not just call it matter?<sup>24</sup>

For Morton, finding what exists 'between polarized terms such as God and matter, this and that, subject and object' opens us into an interconnected way of being that, he claims paraphrasing Heidegger, reveals that we're part of the world we claim to

look on and 'sustain'. Like White, Morton wants a connection to something, but it's not 'God': 'God' evokes conservatism, fascism, extremism, ego, and so cannot be thought in an 'interconnected' universe. And like so many critics of Christianity, Morton dualistically rejects the God of cartoonish orthodoxy for his own exoticized reading of eastern spirituality as a philosophy of oneness he strips of its religion to make commensurate with a Dawkinsian 'wonder'.

### *Frozen religion*

In his 'prequel' to *Ecology without Nature – The Ecological Thought* – Morton stages his discovery of Buddhism. Readers are treated to a holiday report from Morton's two-week trip to Tibet, where he camps under the Milky Way and realises how much 'Tibetan culture and religion is all about space':

The tantric teachings say there are 6,400,00 Tantras of Dzogchen (texts of a form of Tibetan Buddhism). On Earth we have seventeen. Up there, in the highly visible night sky, perhaps in other universes, there exist the remaining 6,399,983. Up there, someone is meditating.<sup>25</sup>

Dreaming under shooting stars, Morton considers Buddhism's 'ecological thought', one wherein 'our Universe, along with one billion universes like it, floats within a single pollen grain inside an another on a lotus flower'. No wonder 'Tibetans' 'think big', Morton proclaims: 'Tibetans would arrive at the edge of the Solar System and declare, "Wow, what a great opportunity to learn more about emptiness"'. Despite Clare's encounter with the 'edge of the Solar System', in which he envisions the secrets of heaven, Morton is determined to oppose 'Tibetans' ('outer space wouldn't undermine their "beliefs"'), and Christians, who cower before science and the discovery of galaxies.<sup>26</sup> 'Good' Buddhism, presentist and peaceful, welcomes the beyond as part of its commitment to 'compassion', 'nonviolence' and 'restorative justice'; 'bad' 'Christian apocalypticism' looks only towards the end of times, knowing that, since 'the end of the world is nigh', there 'isn't much point in caring'.<sup>27</sup> Morton's painfully ignorant reading of both Christianity and Buddhism continues through to the conclusion of *The Ecological Thought*, where he admits that 'There might be seeds of future ways of being together in religion, as there are in art', but it's a form of togetherness that needs, he thinks, a new term.<sup>28</sup> Morton votes for the word 'mesh'. Not only does 'mesh' describes the 'interconnectedness of all living and non-living things' for Morton, it also scores highly for him because it 'sounds' scientific ('it has uses in biology, mathematics, and engineering').<sup>29</sup> He also likes 'mesh' because it gets him around using a holistic or sacred language, rejected because it connotes a warmth, fuzziness, brightness and optimism, and thus a naïve meaninglessness. Christianity is now condemned, not simply for its cruel apocalypticism, but for its 'strongly affirmative, extraverted, and masculine' emphasis on health, heartiness and coziness.<sup>30</sup> Only negativity is truly ecological, Morton argues, because it includes the feminine, sickness, darkness, irony and fragmentation, and also because it asserts our melancholic attachment to a mother earth wherein we experience loneliness as a 'sign of deep connection'.<sup>31</sup>

If negativity is more ecological than positivity, and the negative connotes the 'feminine' and the 'dark', then it might be argued that Morton contravenes the assessment of his earlier book by putting a feminized and introverted ecology on a pedestal over a positive and healthy one.<sup>32</sup> If we agree with Morton in *Ecology without Nature* that such a move is 'a paradoxical act of sadistic admiration', then it follows that Morton's own project is itself potentially quasi-sadistic in its fetishizing of negativity, sickness and loneliness; and his cultural ignorance regarding both Christianity and Buddhism (not to mention his self-appointed role as advisor to the 'Tibetans') extraordinary. And yet it is not atypical within ecocriticism to parody Christianity while elevating a faux Buddhism, sneering at any idea associated with either transcendence or immanence. Thus Morton denounces 'Romanticism', but excepts 'John Clare and William Blake' as 'outsiders' to 'mainstream Romanticism' without discussing why they were outsiders, or reviewing their immensely canonical position within current literary studies, or thinking about their relationship to other 'non-mainstream' writers (Morton does not, for example, reference any Romantic women writers, possibly because, as already noted, he believes 'the figure of Woman' is no longer a problem).<sup>33</sup> At the same time, he hounds Heidegger out of the debate while simultaneously poaching from his work; and then condemns the influential phenomenologist, David Abram, for generating in his book *The Spell of the Sensuous* a 'fantasy-environment' dependent on 'silent reading'.<sup>34</sup> Morton especially dislikes Abram's book because it presents an 'image' of 'being embedded within a horizon, which establishes the *ersatz* primitivism of ecological writing in general . . . the more embedded the narrator becomes, the less convincing he or she is as a spokesperson for the totality that he or she is trying to evoke'.<sup>35</sup> But Morton can only 'think' Abrams' horizon as illusory because of the dualistic approach in which his thinking is caught: despite experiencing a joined-up sense of 'wonder' while star-gazing in the desert, he can only bemoan his dependence on religious language and sacred joy to explain such an experience. Morton needs religion to evoke and describe his own sensitivity to ecological disaster, even though he's locked into a thinking of it as ideological. All he can do is empty religion of its 'belief', replace its 'wonder' and hospitable inclusiveness with secular words like 'mesh', and then admit to his readers that his own thinking might just be 'too profound' for them and that it might be better to 'freeze' the mesh back 'into religion' anyway.<sup>36</sup> We are rescued from T. E. Hulme's spilt, treacly religion and given frozen religion instead.<sup>37</sup>

### *Cosmic companions*

Clare's religious ecology is neither treacly nor frozen, but rather cosmic. Like 'Romanticism' and 'religion', the word 'cosmic' has a poor reputation in literary criticism as denoting abstract 'experience'. But its signification as *kosmikos*, meaning at once belonging to the world and relating to the universe, breaks the dualism between 'us' (the 'earth') and 'out there' (the 'universe'). Clare's cosmos is inclusive and communal, and is only threatened by a human will to stand outside of the world as if it is a scene of which we are a single part, the drama of which we

grasp through our imposed reading of it in relation to ourselves.<sup>38</sup> Like Morton, I invoke Heidegger's essay on the world picture here, but unlike Morton, find its language useful for conjuring Clare's vision of the human as part of 'that which is', in 'company with itself' and open to both 'oppositions' and 'discord'.<sup>39</sup> In Heidegger's reading, the Greeks are exemplary achievers of such openness to being, apprehending themselves as part of what 'is' in contrast with us 'moderns' obsessed as we are with standing over and against being as that which needs to be represented. Modern 'man' thus makes himself into an object in his own picture, and loses the ability to recognize what 'is' beyond stockpiled resources on which we can call for either consumption or production. For Heidegger, the truth (*a-letheia*) of being is withdrawn or hidden (unconcealed) from the moderns, not as mystery or enigma, but as a way of indicating that entities are always more than our experience of them.<sup>40</sup> What we can 'know' is that earth remains the 'ground' from which and into which living things emerge and withdraw. Humans override this by visualising the world instrumentally as a resource we can exploit: we seek to systematize and classify the world into usable assets (trees make furniture) or aesthetic experiences (trees have 'intrinsic' beauty).<sup>41</sup> All things, all presences, become nothing more than a standing reserve to be used up and discarded. Against this, Heidegger asks us to engage with the interconnectedness (the 'gatheredness') of humans, earth, gods and sky, a 'simple oneness' of 'four' Heidegger calls the 'fourfold'. There is nothing cryptic or abstruse about this notion; rather Heidegger points to an affective state of feeling 'with' rather than 'of' the earth, stating that we 'are in the fourfold by dwelling' and that 'dwelling' means 'to spare, to preserve . . . Mortals dwell in that they save the earth'.<sup>42</sup> We 'dwell' poetically, Heidegger writes, because we belong through listening, a process that causes us to 'embrace' all persons and things, 'to love them, to favour them'.<sup>43</sup> Poetry teaches us to listen and attend through words that unfold the world, allowing it to shine forth through what Heidegger calls 'intimate kinship' and 'open to light' that which safekeeps and cares.<sup>44</sup> While productive and capitalizing thinking hems in (enframes) the world as a utility to expend and consume, poetry reveals and opens. Poetic thinking, then, should not 'depict' a world that readers aesthetically devour, but instead open into a 'questioning' and 'care' that brings us into kinship with all elements of the cosmos of which we belong.

That Clare is a poet who attends to even the smallest of these elements as part of the interconnectedness of things has been critically acknowledged. With his *John Clare: Flower Poems* (2001), Simon Kövesi drew a generation of readers to Clare by pointing out his attention to natural detail and pattern as 'evidence of divinity, of a maker' that oversees a world 'of micro-cosmic ecosystems, and humanity's relationship with and effect upon them'.<sup>45</sup> Tim Chilcott too notes Clare's 'imaginative leaps from cosmos to cowslip' in his edition of Clare's 1841 poems; and Nicholas Birns records a 'chant of personal and even cosmic discovery' throughout his well-anthologised 'The Flitting'.<sup>46</sup> Jonathan Bate also invokes the 'cosmic situation' Clare's poetry captures by reflecting on Gaston Bachelard's reading of the 'cosmic implications' of bird nests.<sup>47</sup> For Bate, Bachelard's identification of 'the naïve wonder we used to feel when we found a nest' helps explain Clare's experience of it as 'an entire universe', its 'cosmic implications' producing at once child-like



amazement and vulnerability.<sup>48</sup> Clare's nests are 'mystic' ('To the Snipe', MP IV, p. 575, ll. 24, 25) spaces 'Of care' ('The Robins Nest', MP III, p. 533, l. 30) that enable a secret joy ('Sand Martin', MP IV, p. 310, l. 12) held in place by 'modelled' moss, wood and clay ('The Thrushes Nest', MP IV, p. 187, ll. 7-8).<sup>49</sup> Clare's 'poetic revealing' of the kinship he feels for birds and their nests really does 'shine forth' in the form of 'shining eggs as bright as flowers', 'like heath bells gilt with dew' ('The Thrushes Nest', ll. 9-10). Yet these nest poems evoke more than an idealized world of shelter and care. They extend into what Haraway, predating Morton's 'mesh', calls a 'knot in motion', in which 'beings constitute each other and themselves' through 'their reaching into each other' as 'companion species'.<sup>50</sup> For Haraway, companion species are biologically interrelated, not just organically, but in terms of their 'significant otherness': the fact that we are different from other 'things' in the world, 'human and animal', makes the 'partial connections' we have with them even more significant.<sup>51</sup> An ethics that feels and intuitively the nonhuman, Haraway argues, realizes difference with 'grace', joining them in a kind of 'Real Presence' that exposes being as emotional experience, in Clare's case, his being 'in company' with (or a companion species alongside) birds and their nests.<sup>52</sup> He protects that experience by calling on religious language to forge bonds of intimate kinship, not only between himself, birds and nests, but also between the living and the spiritual, the material and the immaterial. Even in the brief examples so far quoted, mystical nests bear golden eggs that synaesthetically shine like bells, objects Clare and his readers would have seen only inside church. As generic religious symbols – bells are found in churches of all denominations – Clare's 'heath bells' elucidate the crossover between the religious and the ecological. 'Gilt with dew', the flower bells appear spotlit within the mist, shimmering like gilt cups, but rooted in an uncultivated heath. Moreover, as similes – they are *like* the eggs sheltered in the thrush's nest – they forge an ideal interconnected image for Clare, gathering together the church, flowers, birds, the heath and the mist, as well as Clare as onlooker.

### *'We heard the bells chime'*

The reach and euphony of church bells for Clare goes beyond their material status as ecclesiastical measures of everyday rhythm. Chiming out to indicate the beginning and end of workdays, births, weddings, deaths, funerals, as well as liturgical and ceremonial duties, bells called specifically to the local community, their pealed content encoded from town to town. The church at Helpston, as historian Daniel Crowson tells us, rang a 'curfew bell' in the morning and evening, while its tower housed 'three mass bells' together with the bell that 'sounded the start of different village functions', the 'gleaners' bell and the pancake bell', the 'bell for the static and the bullock fair' and 'the carriers' bell'.<sup>53</sup> Making clear the distinct tone of local bells, Clare notes hearing the 'Ufford bells chimeing for a funeral' while on a 'walk in the fields'; and bells were regularly sounded to guide lost travellers and shepherds through bad weather or kept noticeably silent during periods of mourning or reflection.<sup>54</sup> For Clare, however, the sound and rhythm of the bell accords with the poem, both living acoustic markers of 'the reflection and the remembrance of what has been'.<sup>55</sup> As Clare writes in 'Evening Bells' (EP II, pp. 254-

255), bells not only ring out the 'sweetest' (l. 3) sound he can aurally imagine, but they also 'swell' into 'the music of the skies' (ll. 7-8), breathing across the landscape's 'lonely dells' (l. 12). Clare's synaesthetic world is transfigured by the 'rise' (l. 6) of bells on 'this earthly ball', a phrase that exposes the vulnerability of the planet as much as 'the blue marble', the title of Apollo 17's famous 1972 photograph of the earth from space. The gentle pulse of Clare's evening bells are held buoyant in the poem by 'Zepheers breathing' (l. 16) as the wind carries the bells' ringing around the landscape like an invisible and permeable boundary. This 'ringing round' (l. 48) is repeated in 'Sabbath Bells' (MP III, pp. 573-575), where their chime grants the security of borderlines without any of the malevolence of enclosure, while engendering at once a listening experience and trigger for verse. Here are the first and fifth stanzas:

Ive often on a sabbath day  
 Where pastoral quiet dwells  
 Lay down among the new mown hay  
 To listen distant bells  
 That beautifully flung the sound  
 Upon the quiet wind  
 While beans in blossom breathed around  
 A fragrance oer the mind [ . . . ]

The ear it lost and caught the sound  
 Swelled beautifully on  
 A fitful melody around  
 Of sweetness heard and gone  
 I felt such thoughts I yearned to sing  
 The humming airs delight  
 That seemed to move the swallows wing  
 Into a wilder flight (ll. 1-8; 33-40)

As in 'Evening Bells' and the later 'The Chiming Bells' (LP II, p. 1036), Clare sensualises sound as something we can touch on the wind, smell in the blossom and echo through song: there is no break between the sonority of the bells within the landscape and those who listen to its knell. As R. Murray Schafer argues, the audile inclusivity of the church bell renders it an 'acoustic calendar', the 'most salient sound signal in the Christian community' and one that defines the parish as an 'acoustic space'.<sup>56</sup> Schafer also notes, recalling line 4 of Clare's 'Sabbath Bells', that church bells are most 'powerfully evocative' when listened to from afar: 'Perhaps no sound benefits more from distance and atmosphere. Church bells form a sound complement to distant hills, wrapped in blue-gray [sic] mist'.<sup>57</sup> Their hushed far-off sounds open us into the world of which we are already part, rather than separating us from it by calling us elsewhere.

Church bells ring out again in Clare's 'Autobiographical Fragments', where they echo through the 'qu[i]et' of 'nature[s] presence' and into Clare's fellowship with shepherds and herd boys. In the following extract, Clare conjures his loving

feelings towards the natural world as a space of gentle leisure (a place to throw marbles or go strawberry picking) and one that is significantly deepened by the chiming of church bells calling his community to prayer:

I grew so much into the qu[i]et love of nature[s] presence that I was never easy but when I was in the fields passing my sabbaths and leisures with the shepherds and herd boys as fancys prompted sometimes playing at marbles on the smooth beaten sheep tracks or leap frog among the thimey molehills somethings ranging among the corn to get the red and blue flowers for cockades to play at soldiers or runing into the woods to hunt strawberrys or stealing peas in church time when the owners was safe to boil at the gipseys fire who went half shares at our stolen luxury we heard the bells chime but the fields was our church and we seemd to feel a religious feeling in our haunts on the sabbath while some old shepherd sat on a mole hill reading aloud some favour[i]te chapter from an old fragment of a Bible which he carried in his pocket for the day a family relic<sup>58</sup>

The 'things' that populate Clare's world here, people, plants, animals, books, are presented as part of one interconnected space: moles and sheep are signified through their impact on the earth (molehills and sheep tracks), and flowers and berries become an unrestricted 'luxury' available to everyone once the landowners are in attendance at church. The bells signal 'safe' time for all that are called to God: Clare conveys a feeling of ease in the passage both because the landowners are temporarily disappeared into their church, and also because he is liberated into the sacred space of the fields with his friends. Resonating from the church but moving far beyond it, the bells call Clare and company, not to the orthodoxy and doctrine of church ritual, but into a 'religious feeling' enhanced by the phonic power of an old shepherd reading from his battered family copy of the Bible.<sup>59</sup> For Clare, his sound perception of the bells, the Bible reading and the spiritual emotion each evoke is a psychoacoustic route into a profound 'religious feeling' that is rooted in the 'haunts' of a field and experienced on the 'sabbath'. The natural world is not external to the church: Clare speaks against John Wesley's 'all the world my parish' world picture, in which 'glad tidings of salvation' were universally painted, absorbed and instilled.<sup>60</sup> Rather, Clare experiences the fields as 'our church' ('the fields! / our church', writes Stephen Collis in his creative reading of Clare), summoned by bells and materialized by everything he sees around him, from the Bible-reading shepherd to the raw stuff of a mole hill.<sup>61</sup>

This non-dualist embrace of kinship holds that all things are related and equivalent, a communion that extends even to spirits and ghosts. In 'Autobiographical Fragments', Clare associates 'bells in churches ringing in the middle of the night' with 'spirits warning men when they was to dye' (53), exposing his wider interest in superstitions, community rituals, communal tale-telling and folkloric festivals. In her study of Clare's religion, Houghton Walker devotes time to both Clare's 'alternative beliefs' and his orthodox religious reading, dispelling a critical secular desire to strip Clare of spiritual convictions. For Houghton Walker, Clare's religious awareness is 'intellectual and experiential', inclusive of both spirits

and orthodoxy, and informed as much by Anglicanism, Methodism and the Quakers, as religious freethinking and ghost stories.<sup>62</sup> At the same time, Houghton Walker reveals that Clare's profound familiarity with theological literature and his commitment to the 'Mystery' of religious 'truth' makes sense within a Christian frame. As Clare states: 'No religion upon earth deserves the epithet of divine so well as the Christian'; it has 'nothing to record but prayers for mercy'; 'its beautiful instruction was peace on earth & good will towards men'; its 'founder' 'professed' what he 'pratished'; 'Religion properly defined is the grand aspiration to live well & die happy – Do unto others as ye would others should do unto you was the creed of the divine founder of christianity'.<sup>63</sup> While none of this identifies Clare as a Christian, it does affirm his deep affective connection with Christianity as an ecumenical and cosmic 'divinity' founded by a man that was, like Clare, on 'the side of poverty'.<sup>64</sup> That Christ was poor is a key driver behind Clare's anger at those who reduce religion to 'little more then cant / A cloak to hide what godliness may want' ('The Parish', EP II, pp. 697-779, ll. 455-456), its churches populated by hypocrites who 'pay [ ] religions once a week respects' (l. 490). Clare recounts how such 'weekly church goers' attack him for 'forsaking the "church going bell"' for 'the religion of the fields' and yet those very bells have called him into a profound religious feeling based on reflection over time. As a poet who confesses to have 'thought seriously of religion', he loathes those who have not: 'if every mans bosom had a glass in it so that its secret might be seen what a blotted page of christian profession and false pretensions woud the best of them display'.<sup>65</sup> Indeed his commitment to the 'sacred design' and beneficial 'power' of an 'almighty' is continually plagued by an anxiety that 'the desird end' outlined in the 'New Testament' will be permanently obstructed 'while cant and hypocrisy is blasphemously allowd to make a mask of religion'.<sup>66</sup> Caught within the walls of the church and paralysed by the anechoic theology within them, the bells become a tocsin warning against the danger of institutionalized irreverence. Only when freed to carillon out over the fields does Clare experience the religious feeling the bells orate, indicating that God is not in nature, but is rather heard through it: 'The voice of nature as the voice of God / Appeals to me in every tree & flower' ('This leaning tree with ivy overhung', MP II, p. 212, ll. 34-35). The sound of God *appeals* to Clare in a verbal echo of a peal of bells, their 'peaceful sound' 'Calmly' reaching the ears of shepherds in an aural equivalent of the 'sweet' scent of the 'beanfields' ('The Chiming Bells', ll. 1, 5, 9). Sound once more synaesthetically gathers Clare's other senses into a consonant experience of peace and joy.

### *'All our kin'*

Like the sound of the bells, religious ideas too flourish outside of the church for Clare. It is as if he wishes to return those New Testament ideas he most values – 'peace', 'good will towards men', care and kindness – to the natural desert world in which it was first preached. As David Jasper notes, Christ's ministry begins and ends in the desert, and it is a space we see Clare collapse into his local environment.<sup>67</sup> He envisions nature as a desert in 'The Request' ('the field's a desert grown', EP I, p. 321, l. 5); but more ominously invokes the desert as a space overridden by artificial

'Edens' in the name of empty fashions of style in 'Shadows of Taste' (MP III, pp. 303-310, l. 56, 171). In 'Remembrances' (MP IV, pp. 130-134) this logic is reversed, the 'cushion'-like 'hills of silken grass' 'leveled like a desert by the never weary plough' (ll. 46-48) leaving particular locales, 'cowper green', for example, stark and barren like 'a desert strange and chill' (l. 62). It is as if deserts are nature's endoskeleton for Clare, raw sacred ground protected and preserved by trees and foliage without which it stands defenceless, calling back to God for repair. In 'Prayer in the Desert' (LP I, pp. 542-543), Clare calls on God as a non-denominational power that might revive the damage humans have effected:

Almighty, omnipotent – dweller on high  
 Protector of earth and its dwellers – thine eye  
 Can look on this desert and bid it appear  
 As green as fresh pastures at spring of the year  
 And bid the earth's fatness bring food at command  
 And refill the cruise that is dry as the sand  
 Almighty omnipotent – dweller in bliss  
 Thy will has the power – and they power can do this (ll. 1-8)

We are in Heidegger's fourfold here, gods in the sky (Clare's god is at once the 'Almighty' and 'Alla' 'God of Mahomet', ll. 17-18), mortals on the ground, and all connected in a shared 'dwelling' that gathers everything into one. By the end of the poem, earth's 'desert of sand' is also God's 'dwelling place' (l. 22), suggesting that despite our depletion of the earth's resources ('Our food is exhausted – the cruises are dry', l. 9), God's 'charity' might 'send / Supply to our wants' (ll. 23-24) in return for a defended faith (l. 21). Dwelling, for Heidegger as for Clare, means being 'at home' through a thinking and attending to the place where we are, one that embodies things living and spiritual.<sup>68</sup> Such faith in being where we are is free of 'fear' (l. 19) and instead, he writes in 'Stanzas' (LP I, pp. 574-575), inheres within 'endless joy', 'bliss' and 'kin' (ll. 1-2, 8). That 'all our kin' means 'Jews christian turks and gentle kind' (ll. 8-9) leads Clare to imagine a 'place above / Redeemed by Gods unbiased mind / And everlasting love' (ll. 10-12), a radically inclusive vision that hints at peace beyond earth. And yet Clare insists that this 'joy' is at once of 'spirits' and a material 'green' place (ll. 21, 5): no wonder he conceives of trees as churches and churches as trees.

Despite Clare's reservations about the hypocrisy of church goers, he was not averse to attending worship on Sundays: 'like many more I have been to church [more] often then I have been seriously inclined to recieve benefit or put its wholesome and reasonable admonitions to practice – still I reverence the church and do from my soul as much as any one curse the hand thats lifted to undermine its constitution'.<sup>69</sup> At the same time, he lists a string of characters in his prose whom he perceives to be 'religious' because they refuse to attend church, the Bible-reading shepherd, for example, as well as the father of his first love, Elizabeth Newbon, who read the Bible in search of interesting stories and 'thought him self a religious man tho he never went to church and he was so for he was happy and harmless'.<sup>70</sup> Revering the church while finding its members and espousals

oppressive, Clare imagines physical church structures spread across the landscape and made of trees. Trees allow Clare to spatially map the landscape, serving as phenomenological points of reference to which he can physically and emotionally look back and locate his position and being.<sup>71</sup> He associates trees directly with churches, either using them as substitutes for places of worship ('On sundays I used to feel a pleasure to hide in the woods instead of going to church to nestle among the leaves and lye upon a mossy bank where the fir like fern its under forest keeps'); or analogies for them ('The arching groves of ancient lime / That into roofs like churches climb').<sup>72</sup> In his short piece, 'Autumn', Clare intimately describes the 'copses of reeds and oziers', willows and apple trees as a way of imagining the church and the tree as equally elevated, deliberately assimilating the 'jiant overtopping trees' with the 'church spire':

and now the church spire looking rather large dimensions catches the eye like a jiant overtopping trees and houses and showing us his magnitude from half way up the tower to weathercock and looks noble above his willow woods nothing looks so noble among country landscapes as church steeples and castle towers<sup>73</sup>

Steeple, spires, towers, trees coalesce here in a cosmic union that threatens to collapse once any aspect of it is abused:

there is the beautifull Spire of Glinton Church towering high over the grey willows and dark wallnuts still lingering in the church yard like the remains of a wreck telling where their fellows foundered on the ocean of time.<sup>74</sup>

As we follow Clare's line of sight, we are moved from a thinking of kinship (the trees and churches as one) to a broken world picture (the trees a shipwreck and their kin drowned), and then back into a compensatory series of correspondences that engages all our senses: men 'cutting the weeds from the drains to make a water course for the autumn rains'; 'larks' and 'redcaps' flying in and out of hedges and grass; stone walls engraved with the names of lovers, 'houses churches and flowers – and sheep hooks and some times names cut in full'; crows nesting in willow trees; and tools that care for, rather than instrumentalize, an earth that is gathered into the landscape as 'rustic implements and appendages of husbandry blend with nature and look pleasing in the fields'.<sup>75</sup>

Here is a poetic that invites us into a revealed world of shelter and care, where labour safekeeps and stones gladly bear our impress in time. It is a dream-like conjuring of connectedness, immediacy and relation in which all things are gathered into a scene of dependency. To close this discussion, I turn to Clare feminising of his model of religio-ecological kinship through his allusion to a female 'Guardian spirit' in 'A Remarkable Dream'.<sup>76</sup> The essay chronicles a series of dreams in which Clare describes being led through fields and crowds, first to a 'book sellers' displaying 'three vols lettered with' his name, and then onto a church where he is met by 'a loud humming as of the undertones of an organ and felt so affraid'. Only when Clare is led out of the church by his guardian 'lady-divinity' does he find a way to calm

himself through a deep listening to the sounds of 'soft music' that fill the 'open air'. He is at once lulled by the sounds of nature and his spirit 'conductress', who 'uttered something as prophet of happiness I knew all was right'.<sup>77</sup> Through a listening to all the world, natural, spiritual, human, nonhuman, Clare is granted a way of conceptualising and thinking the world that he carries from his dream into his waking world, writing it 'down to prolong the happiness of my faith'.<sup>78</sup> Moreover, Clare's reveries are compassed by a musical diminuendo, the eerie blasts of the organ at the church door softening into the 'sound of soft music' to herald Clare's entry into a now spiritualised natural world. His reorienting of our attention – from trees to churches, kinship to shipwrecks, pipe organs to 'open air' music – enacts a synaesthetic gathering of dualisms into an ontology of kinship inclusive of everything. As he writes in a fragment piece, 'Essay on Political Religion', our being is a 'revelation' of a 'providence who works by unknown means for the advancement of the earthly welfare & eternal happiness of mankind – giving to every human being an instinct of faith & a talisman of futurity'.<sup>79</sup> When Clare is called into the fields by church bells and feels before him an interconnected world, he is ecologizing through religion, freed to envision a mode of companionship and care that eclipses both denominational affiliation and secular pastoralism.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Stephen Collis, *The Commons* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 2008), p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> John Clare, 'Autobiographical Fragments', in *John Clare by Himself*, ed. Eric Robinson and David Powell (Manchester: Carcanet, 1996), 34-165 (40).

<sup>3</sup> David Dunn, 'Nature, Sound Art, and the Sacred', *The Book of Music and Nature*, ed. David Rothenberg and Marta Ulvaeus (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2001), 95-107, (98).

<sup>4</sup> Sam Ward notes Clare's fascination with 'sounds' in "'To List the Song & Not to Start the Thrush": John Clare's Acoustic Ecologies', *John Clare Society Journal*, 29 (2010).

<sup>5</sup> On Clare's religion see Sarah Houghton Walker, *John Clare's Religion* (Surrey: Ashgate: 2009); on his ecology, see, for example, Jonathan Bate, *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991) and *The Song of the Earth* (London: Picador, 2000); and Simon Kövesi, 'John Clare's "I" and "eye": Egotism and Ecologism', in *Green and Pleasant Land: English Culture and the Romantic Countryside*, ed. Amanda Gilroy (Leuven and Paris: Peeters, 2004), pp. 73-88.

<sup>6</sup> James C. McKusick, *Green Writing: Romanticism and Ecology* (New York: St. Martin's Press), 2000, p. 78.

<sup>7</sup> *The Commons* is part two of Collis' 'The Barricades Project', in which he aims to poetically obstruct the flow of capital in language by 'walking' through the 'the unownable' space of the 'commons' with Clare, see p. 139.

<sup>8</sup> Collis, *The Commons*, p. 29; Clare, 'Autobiographical Fragments', p. 40.

<sup>9</sup> Clare, 'Autobiographical Fragments', p. 45.

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<sup>10</sup> For a brilliant reading of interconnectivity in Clare through Deleuze and Guattari's 'rhizome', see Simon Kövesi, 'John Clare & ... & ... & ... Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome', in *Ecology and the Literature of the British Left: The Red and the Green*, ed. Valentine Cunningham, H. Gustav Klaus and John Rignall (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 75-88.

<sup>11</sup> Gregory Bateson and Mary Catherine Bateson, *Angels Fear: Towards an Epistemology of the Sacred* (New York: Macmillan, 1987), p. 200.

<sup>12</sup> Timothy Morton, *The Ecological Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 27; on the current controversy surrounding Heidegger, see Peter Trawny's publication of Heidegger's *Schwarzen Hefte* (the black notebooks), in Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe*, IV: Abteilung: Hinweise und Aufzeichnungen, Band 94: Überlegungen II-VI, Schwarze Hefte 1931-1938 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2014); and Emmanuel Faye's *The Introduction of Nazism Into Philosophy in Light of the Unpublished Seminars of 1933-1935*, trans. Michael B. Smith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

<sup>13</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, trans. Thomas Sheehan (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2010), p. 185.

<sup>14</sup> See Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Philosophy: Thinking and Poetizing*, trans. Phillip Jacques Braunstein (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2011), p. 5; and '... Poetically Man Dwells ...', in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (London: HarperPerennial, 1971), 209-227.

<sup>15</sup> Roger Payne, 'Humpbacks: Their Mysterious Songs', *National Geographic*, January (1979), [http://www.nationalgeographic.com/radiox/humpback/hw\\_archive.html](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/radiox/humpback/hw_archive.html), accessed March 15, 2014.

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, Greg Gatenby, *Whale Sound: An Anthology of Poems about Whales and Dolphins* (Toronto: Deadnaught, 1977).

<sup>17</sup> Harold Fromm, 'Ecocriticism at Twenty-Five', *Hudson Review*, 66.1 (2013), 196-208 (207).

<sup>18</sup> Fromm, 'Ecocriticism at Twenty-Five', p. 206.

<sup>19</sup> Harold Fromm, *The Nature of Being Human: From Environmentalism and Consciousness* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), p. 229.

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, Wildlife Acoustics' '3<sup>rd</sup> Generation Song Meter Platform', <http://www.wildlifeacoustics.com/products/song-meter-sm3>, accessed March 15, 2014.

<sup>21</sup> Lynne White, Jr. 'The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis', *Science*, 155.3767 (March 10, 1967), 1203-1207 (1205-1206).

<sup>22</sup> Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery Manuscript, A46, vol. 2, p. 75, qtd in Houghton Walker, *John Clare's Religion*, p. 204; for a more thoughtful reconsideration of christofascism, see Dorothee Sölle, *Beyond Mere Obedience: Reflections on a Christian Ethic for the Future* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1970).

<sup>23</sup> Timothy Morton, *Ecology without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 5.

<sup>24</sup> Morton, *Ecology without Nature*, p. 15.

<sup>25</sup> Morton, *Ecological Thought*, p. 26.

<sup>26</sup> Morton, *Ecological Thought*, p. 27.

<sup>27</sup> Morton, *Ecological Thought*, p. 27.



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- <sup>28</sup> Morton, *Ecological Thought*, p. 134.
- <sup>29</sup> Morton, *Ecological Thought*, p. 28.
- <sup>30</sup> Morton, *Ecological Thought*, p. 16.
- <sup>31</sup> Morton, *Ecological Thought*, p. 16.
- <sup>32</sup> Morton, *Ecology without Nature*, p. 5.
- <sup>33</sup> Morton, *Ecology without Nature*, p. 5.
- <sup>34</sup> Morton, *Ecology without Nature*, p. 129; see David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996).
- <sup>35</sup> Morton, *Ecology without Nature*, p. 133.
- <sup>36</sup> Morton, *Ecological Thought*, p. 135.
- <sup>37</sup> See T. E. Hulme, 'You don't believe in a God, so you begin to believe that man is a god. You don't believe in Heaven, so you begin to believe in a heaven on earth. In other words, you get romanticism. . . . It is like pouring a pot of treacle over the dinner table. Romanticism then, and this is the best definition I can give of it, is spilt religion', in 'Romanticism and Classicism', in *T. E. Hulme: Selected Writings*, ed. Patrick McGuinness (London: Routledge, 2008), 68-83 (p. 71).
- <sup>38</sup> Martin Heidegger, 'The Age of the World Picture', in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper Row, 1977), 115-154 (p. 129).
- <sup>39</sup> Heidegger, 'Age of the World Picture', p. 131.
- <sup>40</sup> Bruce V. Foltz, 'Heidegger, Ethics and Animals', *Between the Species*, Spring (1993): 84-89 (85).
- <sup>41</sup> See, for example, Michael Jordan, *The Beauty of Trees* (London: Quercus, 2012), p. 6.
- <sup>42</sup> Martin Heidegger, 'Building Dwelling Thinking', in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 141-160 (p. 148).
- <sup>43</sup> Martin Heidegger, 'Letter on "Humanism"', in *Pathmarks*, trans. Frank A. Capuzzi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 239-276 (p. 241); I note that Heidegger's 'listening' means an attending to rhythm that goes beyond the aural, and so embraces those who can, as well as cannot, hear, see David N. Smith, *Sounding / Silence* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), and Jennifer Esmail, *Reading Victorian Deafness: Signs and Sounds in Victorian Literature and Culture* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2013).
- <sup>44</sup> Martin Heidegger, 'The Question Concerning Technology', in *The Question Concerning Technology*, 3-35 (pp. 25, 34-35).
- <sup>45</sup> Simon Kövesi, 'Introduction', *John Clare: Flower Poems* (Thailand: M&C Services, 2001), ix-xxii (pp. xviii, xxi).
- <sup>46</sup> Tim, Chilchott, ed., *John Clare: The Living Year 1841* (Nottingham: Trent Editions, 1999), p. xv; Nicholas Birns, '"The riddle nature could not prove": hidden landscapes in Clare's poetry', in *John Clare in Context*, ed. Hugh Haughton, Adam Phillips and Geoffrey Summerfield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 189-220 (p. 199).
- <sup>47</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), pp. 237-239.
- <sup>48</sup> Bate, *Song of the Earth*, p. 158.

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- <sup>49</sup> Simon Kövesi, 'Her Curious House is Hidden': Secrecy and Femininity in John Clare's Nest Poems,' *The John Clare Society Journal*, 18 (July 1999), <http://www.johnclare.info/main/kovesi.htm>; accessed March 15, 2014.
- <sup>50</sup> Donna Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press), p. 6.
- <sup>51</sup> Haraway, *Companion Species Manifesto*, p. 25; Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York and Abingdon: Routledge, 1991), pp. 151-152.
- <sup>52</sup> Donna Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), p. 15; Haraway, *Companion Species Manifesto*, p. 15.
- <sup>53</sup> Daniel Crowson, *Helpston in the Time of the Poet John Clare*, Printed by the Peterborough Standard, May, 1964, pp.6-7; my warm thanks to Guy Franks for generously giving me this reference.
- <sup>54</sup> Clare, 'John Clare's Journal', in *John Clare by Himself*, 171-243 (p. 210); see also John Steeple, 'About Bells', *The Aldine*, 9.4 (1878), 140-141; H. B. Walters, *Church Bells of England* (London: Oxford University Press, 1912) Alain Corbin, *Village Bells: Sound and Meaning in the Nineteenth-Century French Countryside* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Shirley MacWilliam, 'The Sound of Bells and Bellies: Acoustic Authority and Sound Effects', *Circa*, 85 (1998), 22-27.
- <sup>55</sup> Clare 'Autobiographical Fragments', p. 37.
- <sup>56</sup> R. Murray Schafer, *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* (Rochester: Destiny Books, 1977), pp. 53, 55.
- <sup>57</sup> Murray Schafer, *Soundscape*, p. 54.
- <sup>58</sup> Clare 'Autobiographical Fragments', p. 40.
- <sup>59</sup> Clare writes that 'the best poems on religion are those found in the Scriptures', 'John Clare's Journal', p. 180.
- <sup>60</sup> John Wesley, *The Journal of John Wesley* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1951), <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/wesley/journal.vi.iii.v.html>, accessed March 15, 2014.
- <sup>61</sup> Collis, *The Commons*, p. 32.
- <sup>62</sup> Houghton Walker, *John Clare's Religion*, p. 1; while Clare was denominationally open, he shared his culture's prejudice against Roman Catholicism, 'The Catholics have lost their bill once more and its nothing but right they should when one beholds the following Sacred humbugs which their religion hurds up and sanctifys', in Clare, 'John Clare's Journal', pp.229-30.
- <sup>63</sup> Houghton Walker, *John Clare's Religion*, pp. 204, 208, from Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery, A46, vol. 2, p. 75; and Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery, A46, vol. 2, p. 68.
- <sup>64</sup> Houghton Walker, *John Clare's Religion*, p. 204; Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery, A46, vol. 2, p. 75.
- <sup>65</sup> Clare 'Autobiographical Fragments', pp. 78, 133.
- <sup>66</sup> Clare, 'John Clare's Journal', p. 178.
- <sup>67</sup> David Jasper, *The Sacred Desert: Religion, Literature, Art, and Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), p. 15.
- <sup>68</sup> See Heidegger, *Introduction to Philosophy*, p. 3; and 'Building Dwelling Thinking'.
- <sup>69</sup> Clare 'Autobiographical Fragments', p. 30.
- <sup>70</sup> Clare 'Autobiographical Fragments', p. 89.

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- <sup>71</sup> See, for example, Clare 'Autobiographical Fragments', p. 69.
- <sup>72</sup> Clare 'Autobiographical Fragments', p. 73; 'The Progress of Ryhme', ll.173-174.
- <sup>73</sup> John Clare, 'Autumn', in *John Clare by Himself*, 272-275 (p. 272).
- <sup>74</sup> Clare, 'Autumn', p. 272.
- <sup>75</sup> Clare, 'Autumn', pp. 273, 274, 275.
- <sup>76</sup> John Clare, 'A Remarkable Dream', in *John Clare by Himself*, 253-255 (pp. 253).
- <sup>77</sup> Clare, 'A Remarkable Dream', p. 254.
- <sup>78</sup> Clare, 'A Remarkable Dream', p. 255.
- <sup>79</sup> John Clare, 'Essay on Political Religion', in *A Champion for the Poor: Political Verse and Prose*, ed. P. M. S. Dawson, Eric Robinson and David Powell (Manchester: Carcanet, 2000), 281-282 (p. 282).